

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCI-02 IO-04 HEW-02 AID-05 CIAE-00

INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 MMS-01 SP-02 PER-01 ABF-01 L-01

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R 161100Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6981

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT OF SPAIN 2460

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO OGEN PAHO TD

SUBJECT: ASSIGNMENT OF HEW EPIDEMIOLOGIST TO PORT OF SPAIN

ALSO PASS HEW

REF: POS 2350 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY. NEW DIRECTOR OF TRINIDAD REGIONAL VIRUS LAB HAS STRESSED TO EMBASSY IMPORTANCE OF EARLY ARRIVAL IN PORT OF SPAIN OF USG-PROMISED PROFESSIONALS IN ORDER TO LAUNCH CARIBBEAN EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE PROJECT. DIRECTOR (DR. HAMILTON) STRONGLY DISCOURAGED ANY REMAINING THOUGHT OF ASSIGNING PROMISED PROFESSIONALS TO EMBASSY, AND STRESSED THAT THEY SHOULD BE ASSIGNED UNDER PAHO UMBRELLA. HE REPORTED THAT USG COMMITMENT OF \$328,000 TO PROJECT HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED, HOWEVER, AND FIRST FUNDS DRAWN DOWN. EMBASSY URGES PROMPT ASSIGNMENT OF USPHS PERSONNEL. END SUMMARY.

1. NEWLY NAMED DIRECTOR OF EXPANDED TRINIDAD REGIONAL VIRUS LABORATORY (TRVL), DR. PATRICK HAMILTON, CALLED ON DCM OCTOBER 14 (AMB WAS IN TOBAGO) TO DISCUSS PROMISED USG PROVISION OF TWO PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBERS FOR TRVL. DR. HAMILTON IS MAKING HIS PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF TRVL PROGRAMS AND WILL RETURN HERE FROM LONDON IN DECEMBER TO TAKE OVER AS FULL-TIME PAHO-APPOINTED

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DIRECTOR. MEANWHILE, DR. MILES WILLIAMS, WHO PARTICIPATED IN

CONVERSATION, WILL CONTINUE AS ACTING DIRECTOR.

2. DR. HAMILTON STRESSED THAT CONTINUED DELAY IN ARRIVAL OF EPIDEMIOLOGIST AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (AS PROMISED BY USG AT JUNE CONFERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN HEALTH MINISTERS AND LATER CONFIRMED IN SIGNED AGREEMENT BETWEEN USPSH AND DR. P.I. BOYD, SECRETARY TO COMMONWEALTH HEALTH MINISTERS CONFERENCE) AS BECOMING KNOWN THROUGHOUT CARIBBEAN AND WAS CAUSING COMMENT. HE FELT CONTINUED DELAY WOULD LEAD TO MORE OBVIOUS EXPRESSIONS OF DISPLEASURE FROM SOME OF GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED, INCLUDING TRINIDAD. MORE IMPORTANT, THE CRITICAL EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE PROJECT THROUGHOUT THE CARIBBEAN COULD NOT BE LAUNCHED UNTIL THE PROMISED EPIDEMIOLOGIST ARRIVE. HE URGED THAT EVERY EFFORT BE MADE TO HAVE THE PROMISED PROFESSIONALS JOIN THE PAHO STAFF AT TRVL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

3. DCM REPORTED BRIEFLY ON CONSIDERATION WITHIN USG ON WHETHER USPHS PROFESSIONALS FROM CDC ATLANTA WOULD BE ASSIGNED TO US EMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN OR ATTACHED TO PAHO FOR THEIR TRVL RESPONSIBILITIES. DR. HAMILTON RESPONDED WITH STRONG STATEMENT TO EFFECT THAT PAHO AFFILIATION WAS ONLY VIABLE SOLUTION. HE ENUNCIATED A NUMBER OF REASONS FOR THIS CONCLUSION, PRINCIPAL AMONG WHICH WERE: A) NEED TO HAVE ALL PROFESSIONAL STAFF UNDER CLEARLY COHERENT MANAGEMENT UMBRELLA IN ORDER TO FACILITATE HIS RATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF LAB; B) EXISTENCE OF FULLY ARTICULATED MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN PAHO AND GOTT FOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF PREQUISITES, ETC.; AND C) INSULATION OF CARIBBEAN-WIDE SCIENTIFIC SURVEILLANCE PROJECT FROM BILATERAL POLITICAL RIPPLES WHICH MIGHT IN ONE INSTANCE HAVE GRENADA EXPRESSING PIQUE AT USG OVER SOME PRESUMED SLIGHT AND EXCLUDING OFFICIAL US SCIENTISTS, OR IN ANOTHER INSTANCE MIGHT INHIBIT NECESSARY INCLUSION OF ALL OF CARIBBEAN (E.E. CUBA) IN AREA TO BE COVERED. DR. HAMILTON COULD CONCEIVE OF MANY REAL ADVANTAGES TO TRVL, AND NO DISADVANTAGE TO CDC IN OPERATING UNDER PAHO AUSPICES.

4. HAMILTON DID NOTE THAT PAHO-CDC COOPERATION MIGHT BE FACILITATED BY EXPIRATION OF DR. HORWITZ' TERM AS DIRECTOR OF PAHO AND HIS REPLACEMENT BY DR. HECTOR ACUNE MONTEVERDE OF MEXICO FOLLOWING OCTOBER 3 PAHO ELECTION. HE SUGGESTED THAT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DR. HORWITZ AND DIRECTOR OF CDC ATLANTA HAD NOT ALWAYS BEEN MOST AMICABLE.

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5. DR. HAMILTON PERSONALLY IS ACQUAINTED WITH DR. KARL WESTERN, WHOM WE HAVE UNDERSTOOD FOR SEVERAL MONTHS WAS HEW NOMINEE FOR EPIDEMIOLOGIST POSITION. DR. WESTERN WAS ONCE DR. HAMILTON'S STUDENT IN LONDON AND HAMILTON IS HIGHLY PLEASED AT PROSPECT OF DR. WESTERN JOINING TRVL. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF HIS ARRIVAL AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

6. REGARDING RELATED USG COMMITMENT OF \$328,000 TO CARIBBEAN HEALTH MINISTERS, DR. HAMILTON STATED THAT HE WAS GRATIFIED TO LEARN THAT MONEY HAD BEEN MADE AVAILABLE AND THAT DR. BOYD (IN GEORGETOWN) AND ALREADY BEGUN TO EXPEND FUNDS FROM THIS COMMITMENT.

7. COMMENT: IT IS OBVIOUS THAT CONTINUING DELAY IN ASSIGNMENT OF PROMISED USPHS PROFESSIONALS TO TRVL IS BEGINNING TO GIVE USG BAD NAME HERE. FURTHERMORE, WE HAVE NOT HAD CLEAR INDICATION OF CAUSE OF DELAY OR PROSPECTS FOR RESOLVING IT. ISSUE OF ASSIGNMENT TO EMBASSY, RATHER THAN TO PAHO, APPEARS TO BE DEAD, OR SHOULD BE. URGE PROMPT STEPS BE TAKEN TO CUT THROUGH REMAINING RED TAPE AND GET USPHS PROFESSIONALS IN PORT OF SPAIN, ASSIGNED TO PAHO EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE PROJECT AT TRVL. USG IS ON RECORD WITH A COMMITMENT TO CARIBBEAN GOVERNMENTS AND THAT COMMITMENT HAS NOT YET BEEN FULFILLED. NEVERTHELESS, WE ARE GLAD TO NOTE THAT AT LEAST PROMISED FUNDS ARE BEING MADE AVAILABLE. EMBASSY STANDS READY FURTHER TO FACILITATE PROJECT IN ANY WAY REQUIRED.
MILLER

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